

Metal Toxicity and Health

Heavy metals are natural components of the Earth's crust. As trace elements, some heavy metals are essential to maintain the metabolism of the human body. However, at higher concentrations they can lead to poisoning. They cannot be degraded or destroyed but tend to bioaccumulate. The environment, unfortunately, is laden with heavy metals, mostly as a result of big-industry waste. A person spends, on an average, one third of his life at his work place. Therefore the environment in which he works can be a major factor in determining health. Causes of heavy metal toxicity can come from many sources. These sources include pesticides, fungicides, lead paint, wood preservatives, drinking water, thermometers, PVC plastics, and several others. Children may be poisoned by playing in contaminated soil and ingesting the soil through hand to mouth contact.

Symptoms of chronic heavy-metal exposure include depression, irritability, mood swings, tremors, autoimmune diseases, chronic infections and cancer. Skeptics point out that most of these ills can be caused by any number of other factors

Heavy-metal toxicity may be the host of other diseases which is hardly realized by general medical practitioners. Most of the physicians don't think to look at heavy metals as a cause of disease. While there are many ways to reduce the damage done by heavy metals and detoxify from heavy metals but further research needed to explore the possible protective mechanism to fight against metal poisoning.